

The Viability of Liberalism

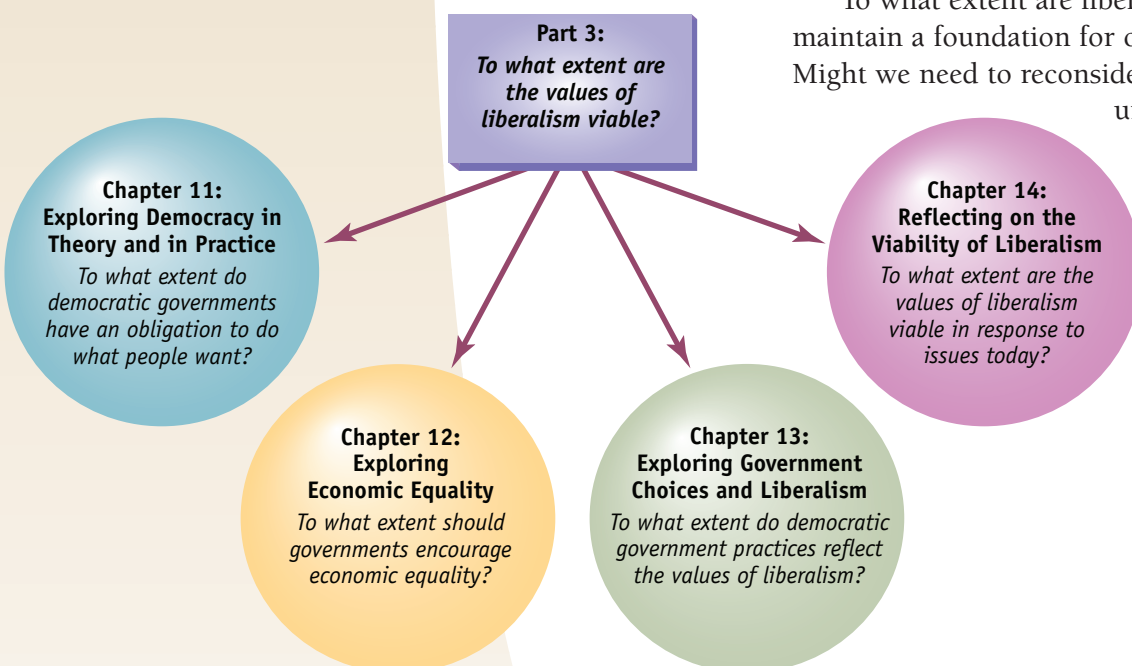
Through your exploration of liberalism in Part 2, you examined how this ideology has changed over time, moving from understandings of classical liberalism to modern liberalism. Industrialization and modernization pressured people to change their ideas about what a liberal society should look like. Classical liberalism focused on the values of individualism, while modern liberalism expanded understandings of liberalism and individualism to also consider the equality, needs, and welfare of more people in society. Some ideologies you examined in Part 2, for example, fascism, also rejected many liberal values for different reasons.

Thus, the Related Issue for Part 3 of this book asks: *To what extent are the values of liberalism viable?* As you continue to determine to what extent you should adopt an ideology, consider which values you believe are most and least important to you and your society, including consideration of the values of liberalism and individualism. Next, evaluate how these values are implemented in the modern world. Then, consider diverse points of view and perspectives about different issues that the world is facing, including concerns with the environment, how we develop and use our resources, debt and poverty, racism, pandemics and health crises, the threat of terrorism, and government censorship. This part of the book will examine how well citizens and governments reflect liberal values in political and economic practices. It will also look at how well governments promote individual rights and freedoms and collective rights in liberal democracies.

To what extent are liberal values viable to address issues and maintain a foundation for our political and economic systems? Might we need to reconsider aspects of liberalism or how we understand this ideology today?

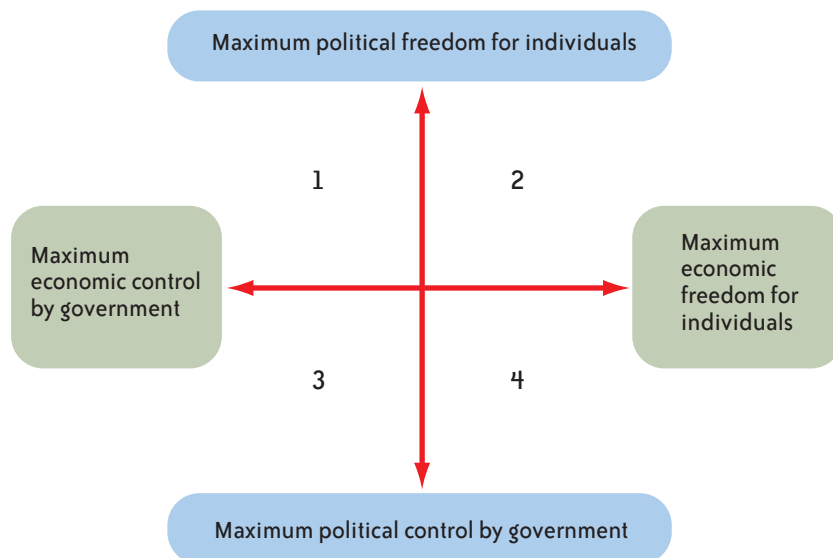
What further changes could occur to liberal values and practices in the future?

To help you begin to reflect on the viability of liberalism, consider to what extent you believe that Canada and other democratic countries are practicing what we say we value in our political and economic systems. Read the following brief example about Canada and answer the three questions that follow.



In March 2009, the Canadian government decided to ban an outspoken British politician, George Galloway, from entering Canada for a speaking tour. Canadian officials state that they banned Galloway for national security reasons, saying that he has provided financial support to Hamas, a Palestinian militant political movement that is considered a terrorist organization by Canada and some other countries and organizations, including the United States and the European Union. Immigration Minister Jason Kenney stated that those who support or promote terrorist organizations should not be allowed into Canada. In April 2009, a Canadian judge upheld the federal government's decision to ban George Galloway from entering Canada. George Galloway, however, was still able to address Canadians through a video interview on the program *Democracy Now!* while he was in New York on his US speaking tour.

Using the information about the government's decision and the political and economic spectrum provided, in what quadrant (1, 2, 3, or 4) do you believe would be the best location to place the government based on this example? What level of political and economic control or freedom does it best demonstrate? To what extent do you believe that the government's actions are reflecting liberal values, such as individual rights and freedoms, economic freedom, competition, and rule of law, in their political or economic practices?



Source: Adapted from David J. Rees, *Global Systems* (Edmonton, AB: Arnold Publishing, 1999), p. 24.

Visit the LearnAlberta.ca website at www.LearnAlberta.ca and select Social Studies and Grade 12 resources; then, select the *Understandings of Ideologies* digital resource for fully interactive learning scenarios entitled ExCite (Exploring Citizenship). These scenarios are directly related to the issues and concepts and the four parts in the Student Resource to enhance learning.

